

“Facing the Future in Medicine”
Presented as the John Warner Duckett Lecture
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John Warner Duckett, a distinguished general surgeon from Dallas, had, after World War II, entered the field of pediatric surgery and was apparently remarkably successful at it. However, he declined to continue that as a specialty and contributed to pediatric surgery in a much broader way by having his son, John Warner Duckett become the country's if not the world's outstanding pediatric urologist.

I was responsible for bringing Dr. Duckett to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia after Dr. Duckett had finished his training and completed the fellowship in pediatric urology at the Hospital for Sick children at the Great Ormand Street Children for Children, London.

This lecture, a tribute in a sense to both father and son, is focused primarily on the demographic and research environments of medicine. The demography of medicine, of course, had to do with the “Graying of America” and the aging “baby-boom” generation that was beginning to have babies of its own, the Echo Effect. In a sense this lecture is quite prophetic about the problems of caring for the aged in the early years of the 21st century, as we are now experiencing.

The problems presented by the graying of America and the coming baby-boom echo dictates the priorities in basic biomedical and behavioral research, which I addressed in the remainder of the lecture. This is the first time I mentioned challenges in the future of providing pediatric and geriatric care at the same time. Interesting that in 1983, I raised the question about the choice of continuing the race down the road of the genetic engineers, as opposed to investing primarily in virology and immunology.

The lecture concludes with the application of such research and the role of academia, as well as the modern practitioner in priority setting in reference to medicine and research. My opinion is that a passive role for practitioners is not enough and that the practicing physician has to translate his or her understanding of the new science and its ramifications for medical practice in some rank order and then relay those conclusions back to the world of research. I recognized that this was not an easy task.

“Baby Boom” Generation
Biliary atresia
Bridges between research & practice
Cancer
Challenge of pediatric & geriatric care at
the same time
Demographic environment of medicine
Dilemmas of choice in urgent practices
Economic environment of medicine

Fertility rate
Genetic engineering
“Graying of America”
Heart disease
Infant mortality
Interferon
Neurotransmitters
Pediatric surgery
Pediatric urology
Practice of medicine informing of
 biomedical & behavioral research
Recombinant DNA

Centers for Disease Control
John Warner Duckett
John Warner Duckett, Jr.
National Institutes of Health